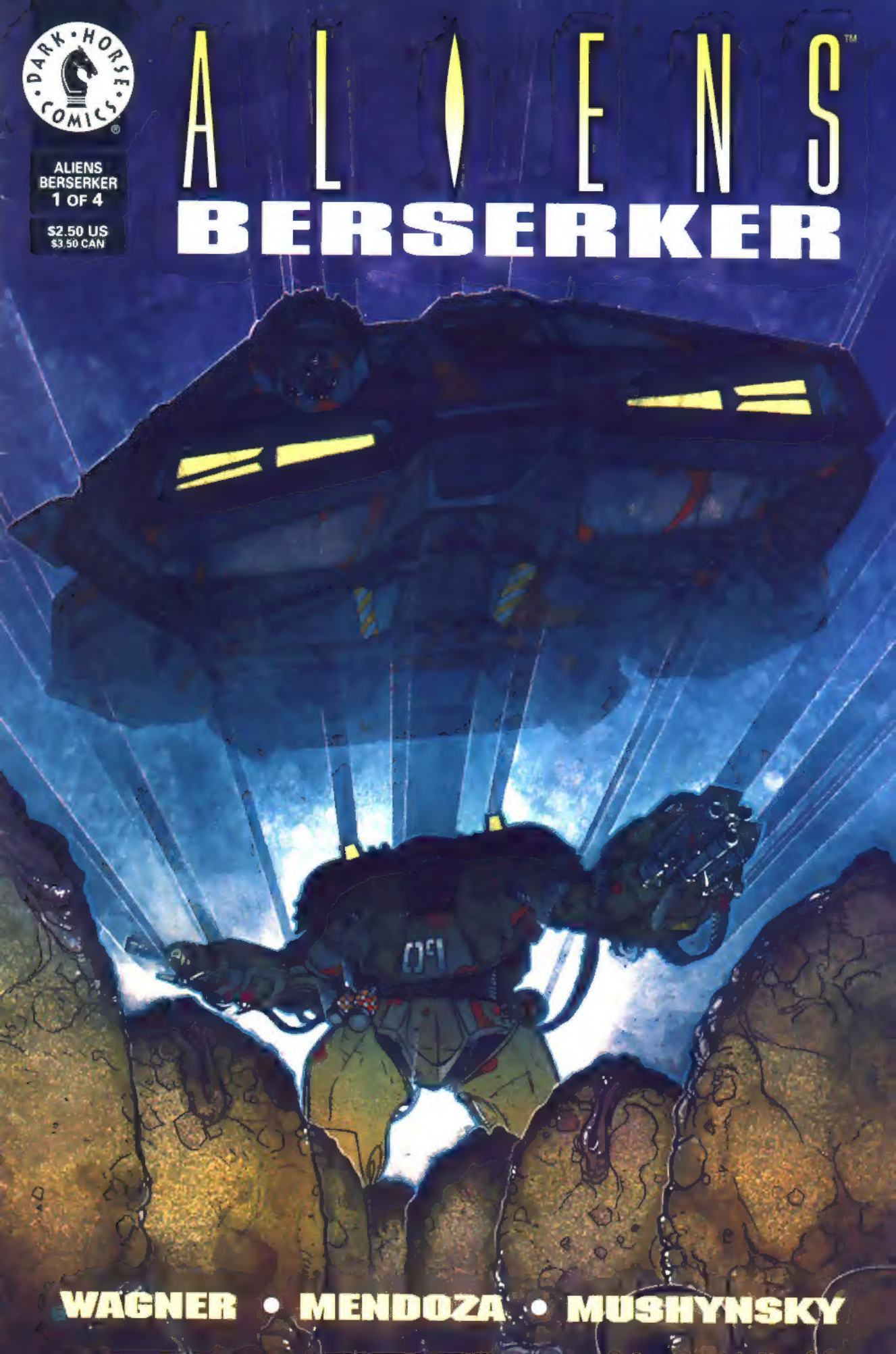
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[BOOK ONE]

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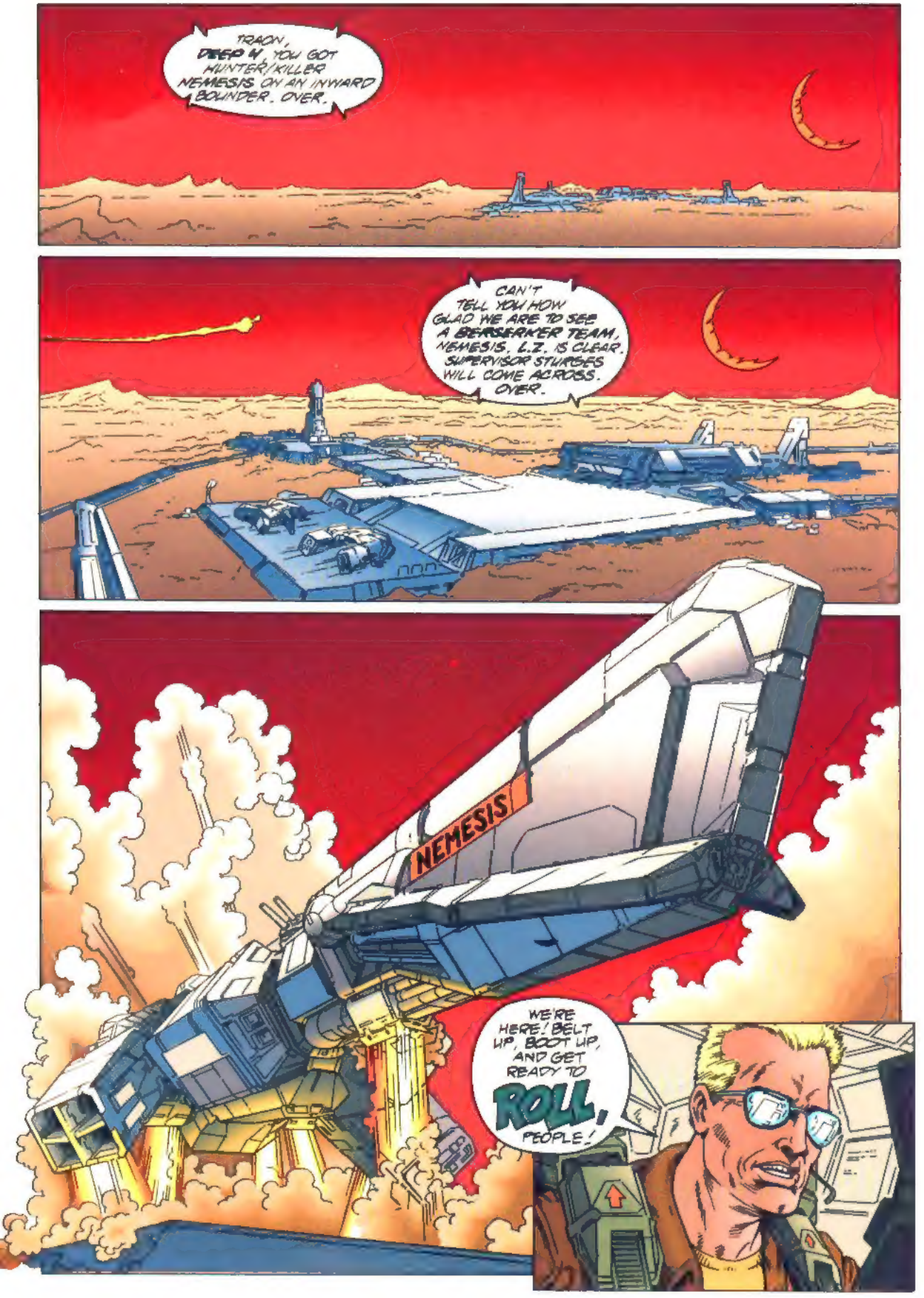
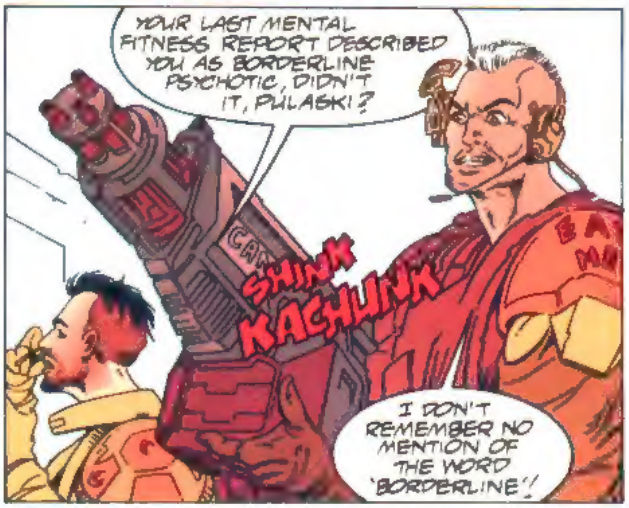

TRAON, DEEP 4, YOU GOT HUNTER/KILLER NEMESIS ON AN INWARD BOUNDER. OVER.
CAN'T TELL YOU HOW GLAD WE ARE TO SEE A BERSERKER TEAM, NEMESIS. L.Z. IS CLEAR. SUPERVISOR STURGES WILL COME ACROSS. OVER.
NEMESIS
WE'RE HERE! BELT UP, BOOT UP, AND GET READY TO ROLL, PEOPLE!

HEY, POP! TEAPE WANTS TO KNOW HOW COME THEY CAN'T TRAIN A DOG TO DO HIS JOB!
I TOLD HIM IT'S 'COS THEY CAN'T FIND A DOG DUMB ENOUGH TO VOLUNTEER!
JESS
PULASKI

YOU'RE A REAL FUNNY GUY, JESS. I'LL LIE AWAKE NIGHTS AND LAUGH ABOUT THAT ONE.
KTCH
WELL I AIN'T DUMB AN' I VOLUNTEERED!


YOUR LAST MENTAL FITNESS REPORT DESCRIBED YOU AS BORDERLINE PSYCHOTIC, DIDN'T IT, PULASKI?
SHINK
KACHUNK
I DON'T REMEMBER NO MENTION OF THE WORD 'BORDERLINE'!

THAT'S WHAT I LIKE, A HAPPY CREW! I'M GOING TO MISS YOU LITTLE RAYS OF SUNSHINE WHEN I'M GONE!
HOW'S MAX, ELLIS?

STILL IN DEEP SEDATION, SIR. RESPIRATORY RATE EVEN, NO REMS.
YOU WANT ME TO RUN A FULL SYSTEMS CHECK, COMMANDER?
THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL, SON. WE MAY BE NEEDING HIM SOON.

TWENTY-SIX MISSIONS AND THEY SADDLE ME WITH ELLIS! WHAT DOES THE GUY DO ALL DAY?
HE'S GREEN. HE'S A GOOD MEDIC. GIVE HIM A CHANCE.

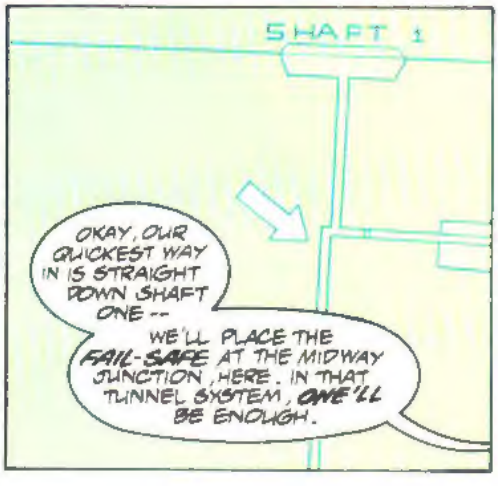
THERE WERE TWO OF THE CREATURES IN AN EXCAVATOR WE RECLAIMED FROM OUR PROTEUS BASE. THANKFULLY, WE MANAGED TO CONFINE THE OUTBREAK TO *NUMBER ONE SHAFT.*

WE'VE CLOSED OFF THE SHAFT AND SEALED THE BLAST BARRIER HERE. NOT EVEN *ALIENS* COULD GET THROUGH THAT.

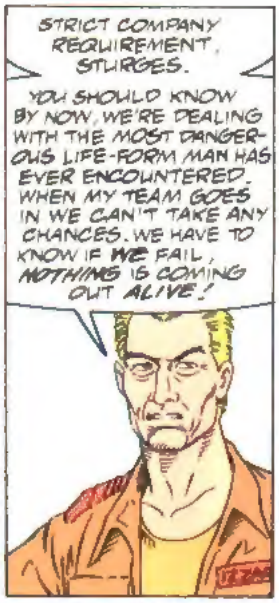
HOW MANY ARE STILL TRAPPED DOWN THERE, MR. STURGES?

THIRTY-ONE. THERE WAS A FAULT ON THE DEEP-LEVEL *HOIST*--

--ACID BURNT THROUGH A CABLE. THERE WAS NO WAY WE COULD REACH THEM...



THAT NUKE GOES BANG THERE AIN'T GONNA BE ANY DEEP H!
BYE-BYE BUGS!
BYE-BYE US!
A-A NUCLEAR DEVICE--?IS...IS THAT NECESSARY, COMMANDER IZZARD? THE SILURIUM DEPOSITS ARE PRICELESS!

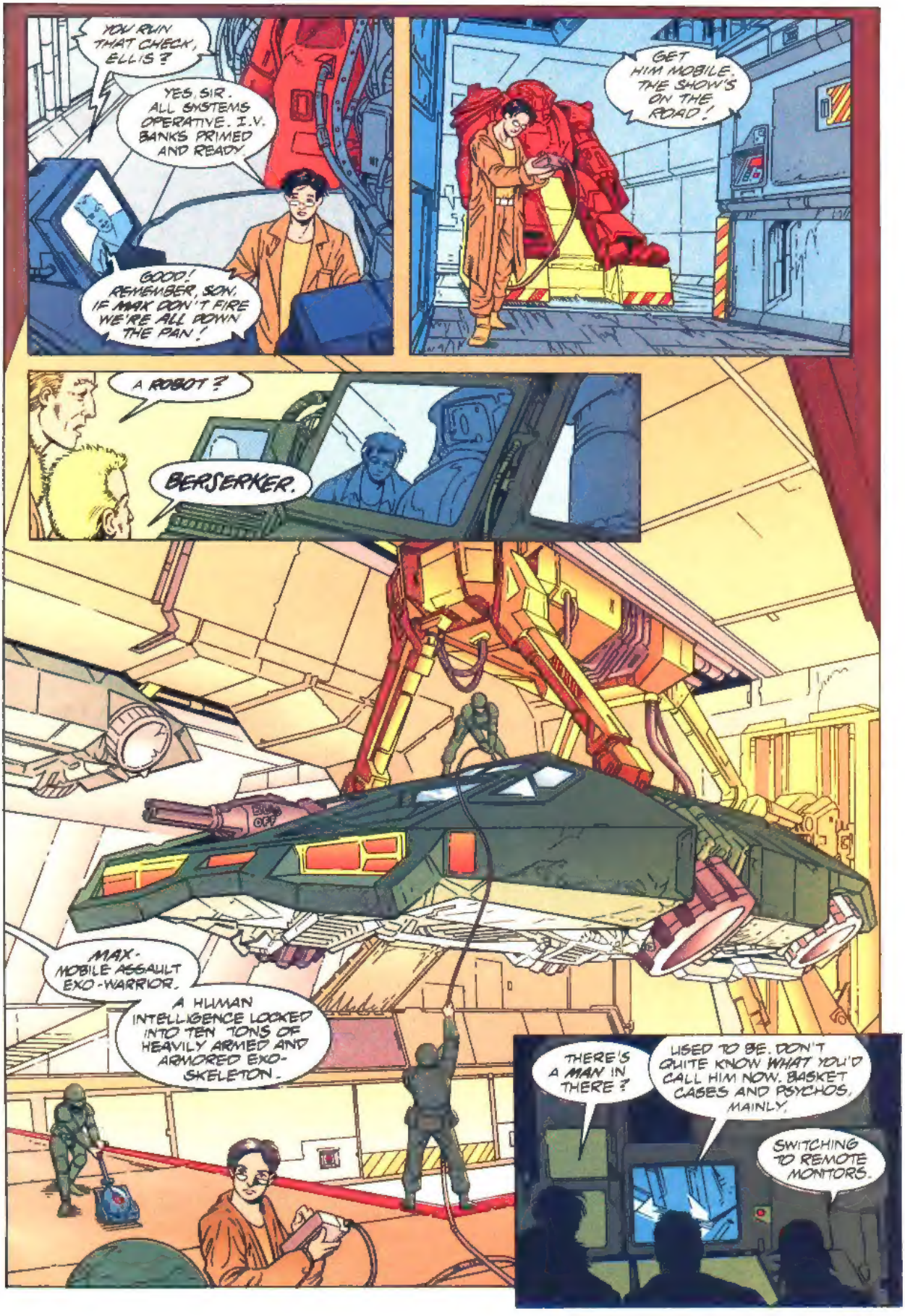

STRICT COMPANY REQUIREMENT, STURGES.
YOU SHOULD KNOW BY NOW, WE'RE DEALING WITH THE MOST DANGEROUS LIFE-FORM MAN HAS EVER ENCOUNTERED. WHEN MY TEAM GOES IN WE CAN'T TAKE ANY CHANCES. WE HAVE TO KNOW IF WE FAIL, NOTHING IS COMING OUT ALIVE!

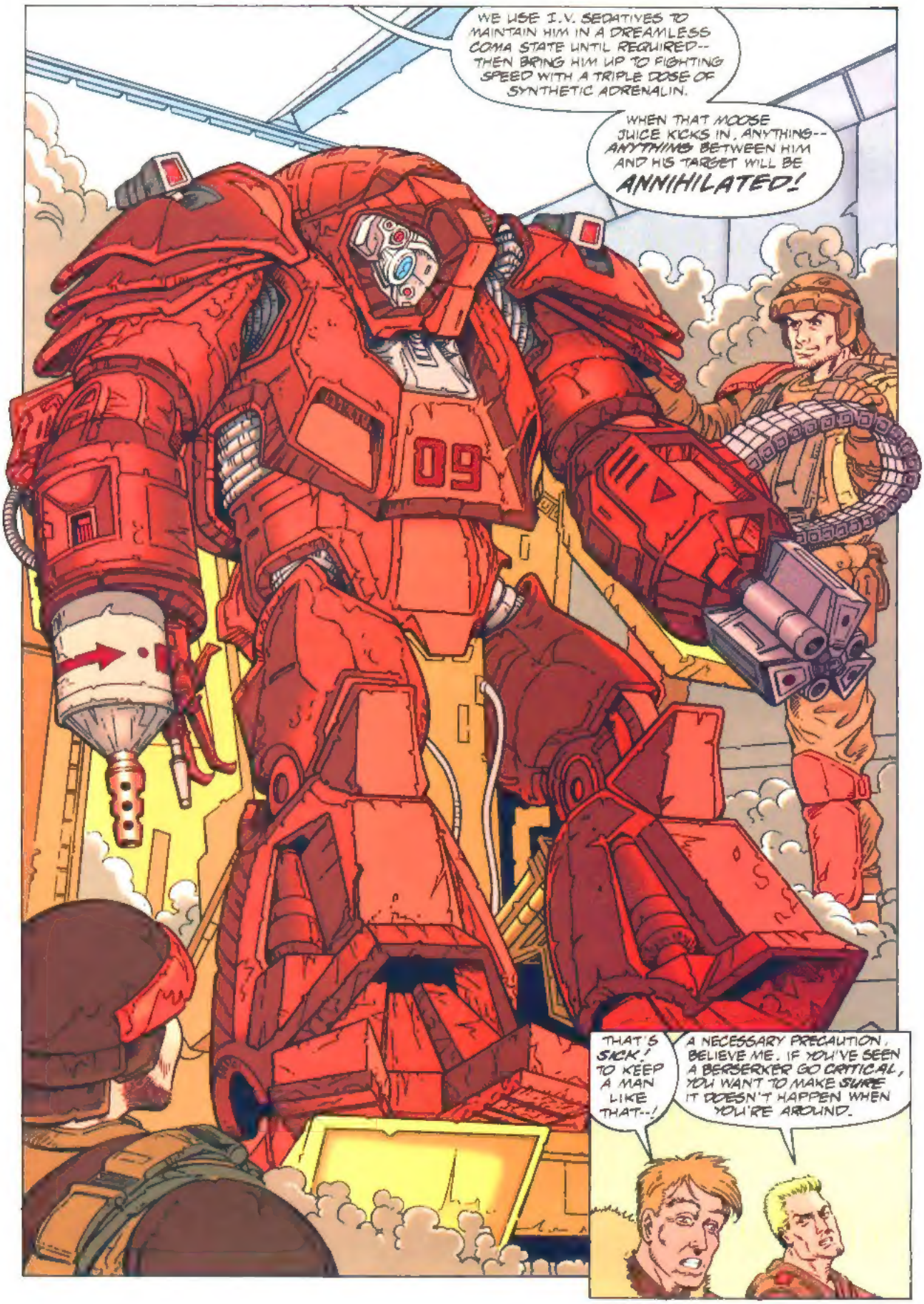
BUT THE PEOPLE TRAPPED IN THERE--
IT'S BEEN EIGHT DAYS. TAKE IT FROM ME, IT'S PROBABLY ALREADY TOO LATE FOR THEM.

ANYTHING ELSE--COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER?
THE USUAL REMINDER--KEEP DROPPING YOUR RELAY BEACONS. IF THE SIGNAL TRACE FADES, GO BACK AND MAKE GOOD. YOU MUST MAINTAIN COMMUNICATIONS AT ALL TIMES.
THAT'S IT! YOU KNOW THE DRILL! LET'S GET IT DONE!
YO!

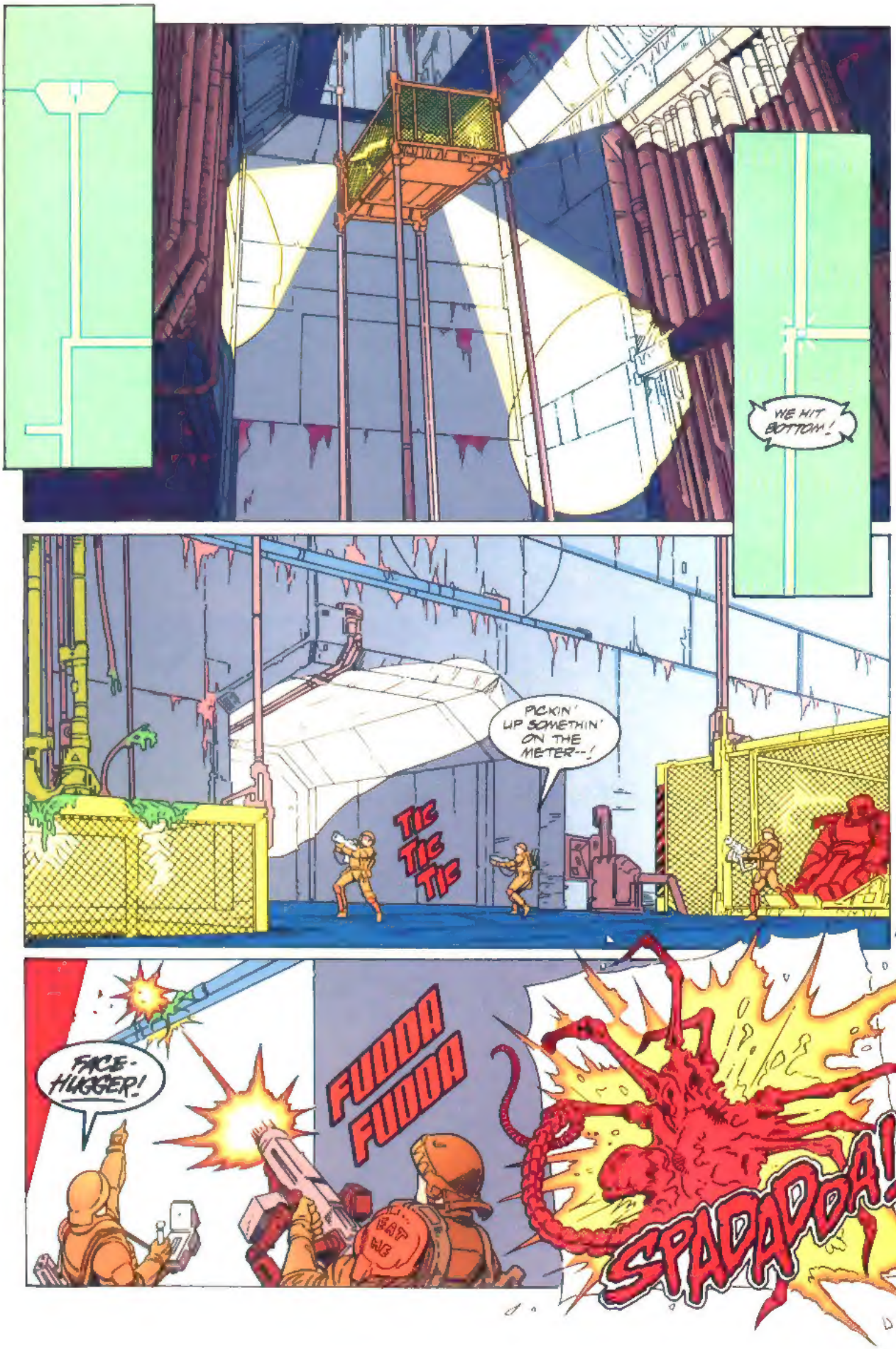
JUST THREE MEN? I EXPECTED AN ARMY!
NEMESIS

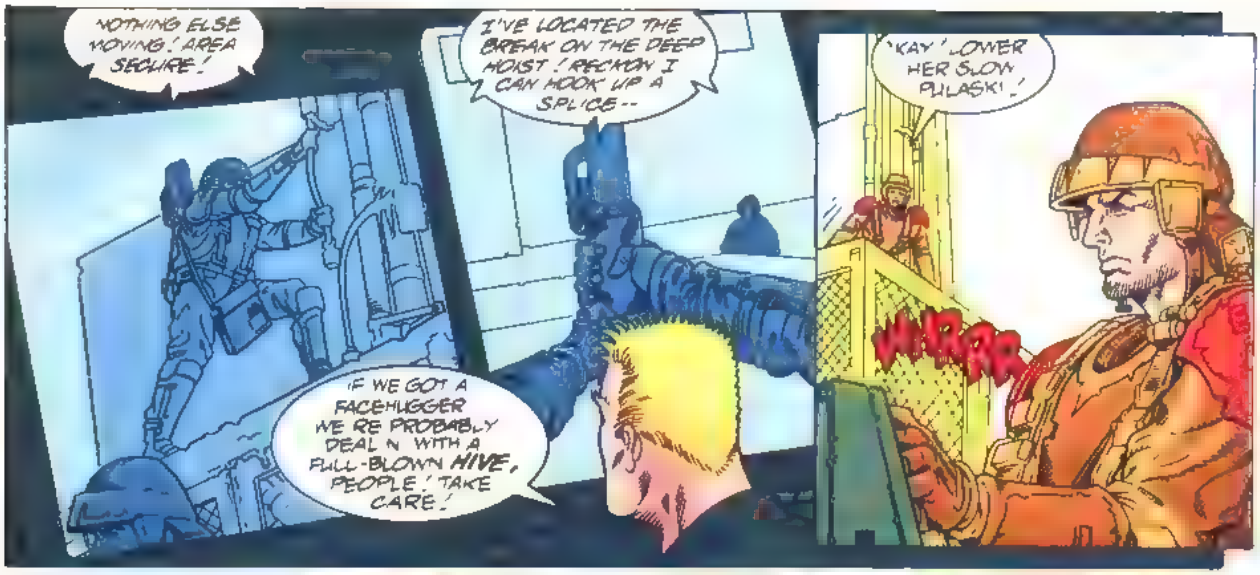
OH, WE GOT THAT, TOO--
IZZARD

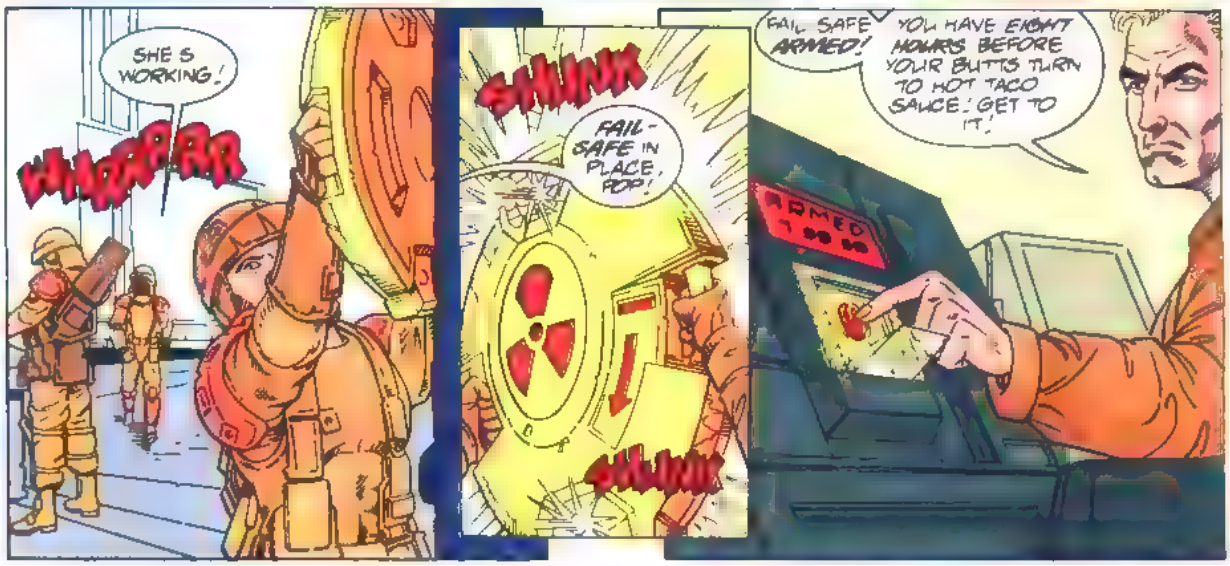

YOU RUN THAT CHECK, ELLIS?
YES, SIR. ALL SYSTEMS OPERATIVE. I.V. BANKS PRIMED AND READY.
GOOD! REMEMBER, SON, IF MAX DON'T FIRE WE'RE ALL DOWN THE PAN!
GET HIM MOBILE. THE SHOW'S ON THE ROAD!
A ROBOT?
BERSERKER.
MAX- MOBILE ASSAULT EXO-WARRIOR.
A HUMAN INTELLIGENCE LOCKED INTO TEN TONS OF HEAVILY ARMED AND ARMORED EXO-SKELETON.
THERE'S A MAN IN THERE?
USED TO BE. DON'T QUITE KNOW WHAT YOU'D CALL HIM NOW. BASKET CASES AND PSYCHOS, MAINLY.
SWITCHING TO REMOTE MONITORS.

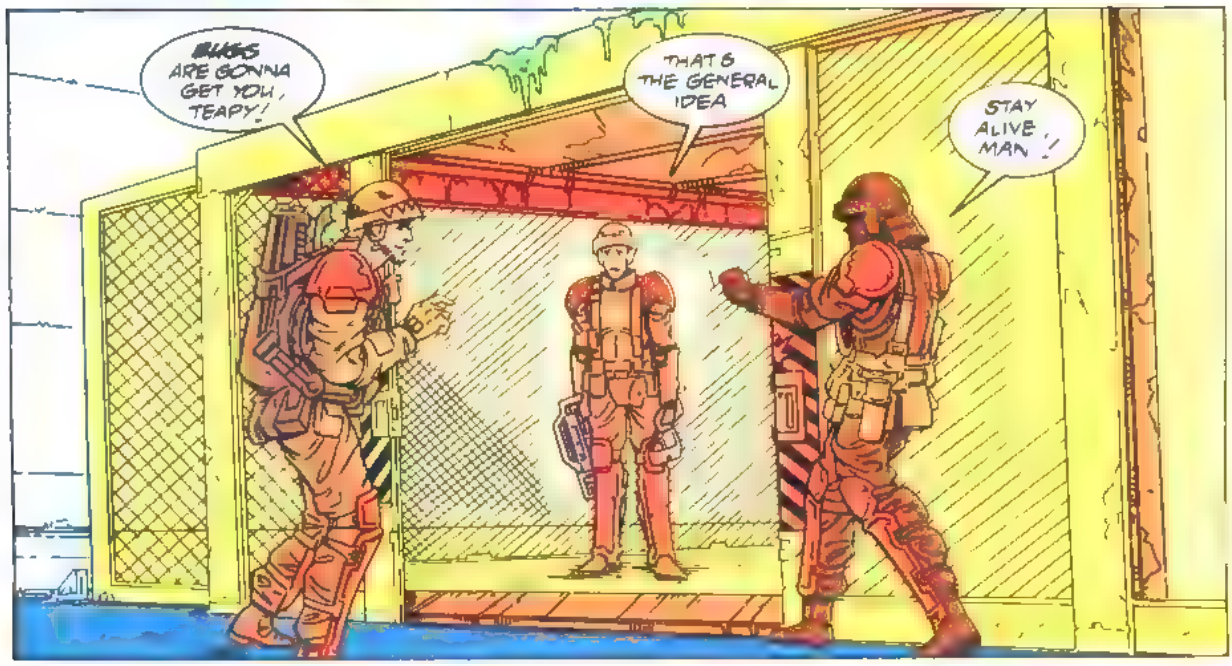

WE USE I.V. SEDATIVES TO MAINTAIN HIM IN A DREAMLESS COMA STATE UNTIL REQUIRED-- THEN BRING HIM UP TO FIGHTING SPEED WITH A TRIPLE DOSE OF SYNTHETIC ADRENALIN.
WHEN THAT MOOSE JUICE KICKS IN, ANYTHING-- ANYTHING BETWEEN HIM AND HIS TARGET WILL BE ANNIHILATED!
09
THAT'S SICK! TO KEEP A MAN LIKE THAT--!
A NECESSARY PRECAUTION, BELIEVE ME. IF YOU'VE SEEN A BERSERKER GO CRITICAL, YOU WANT TO MAKE SURE IT DOESN'T HAPPEN WHEN YOU'RE AROUND.

VRRRMMMMMM
WE GOT US A BUGHUNT!
WE'RE INSIDE THE SHAFTHEAD! NO SIGN OF ALIEN ACTIVITY! GOIN' ON DOWN!
DROP A RELAY!
CHECK RELAY!
READING YOU LOUD AND CLEAR!

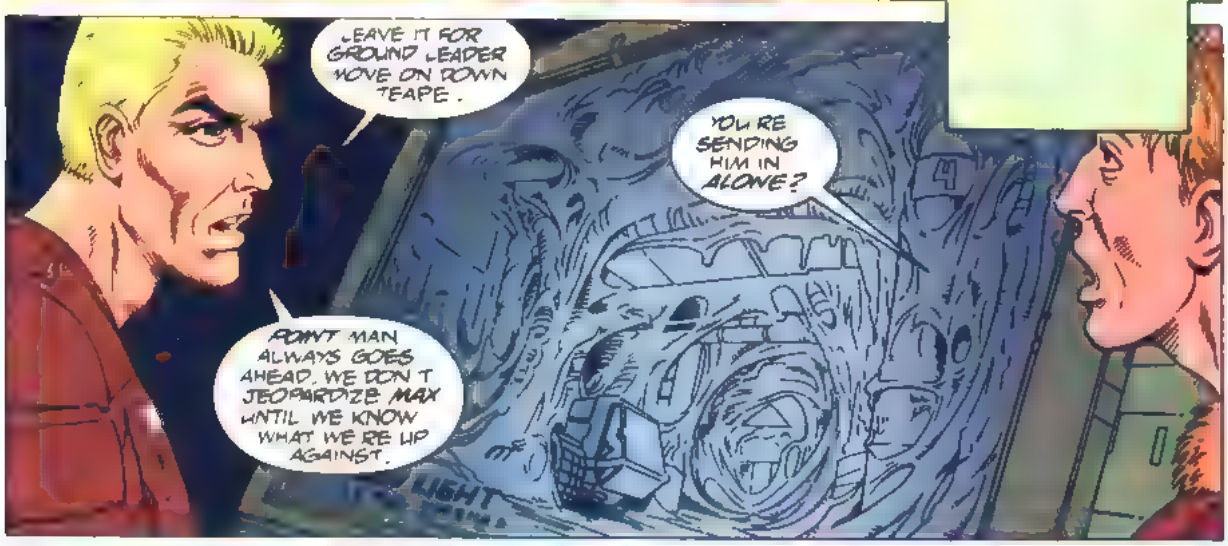

WE HIT BOTTOM!
PICKIN' UP SOMETHIN' ON THE METER--!
TIC TIC TIC
FACE-HUGGER!
FUDDA FUDDA
SPADADDA!

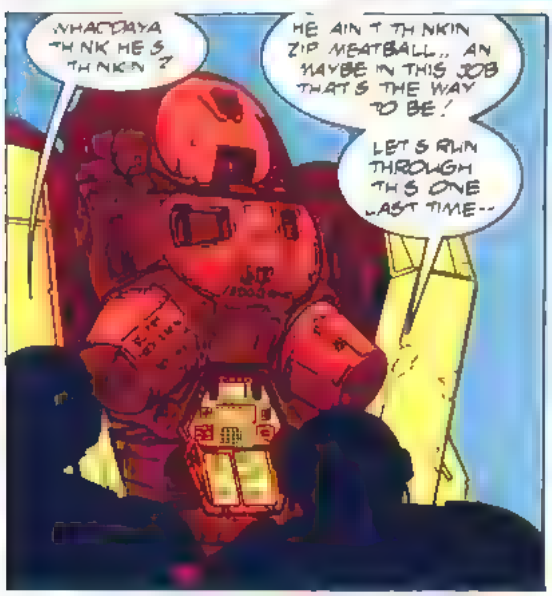

NOTHING ELSE MOVING! AREA SECURE!
I'VE LOCATED THE BREAK ON THE DEEP HOIST! RECKON I CAN HOOK UP A SPLICE--
'KAY! LOWER HER SLOW PULASKI!
IF WE GOT A FACEHUGGER WE'RE PROBABLY DEAL'N WITH A FULL-BLOWN HIVE, PEOPLE! TAKE CARE!

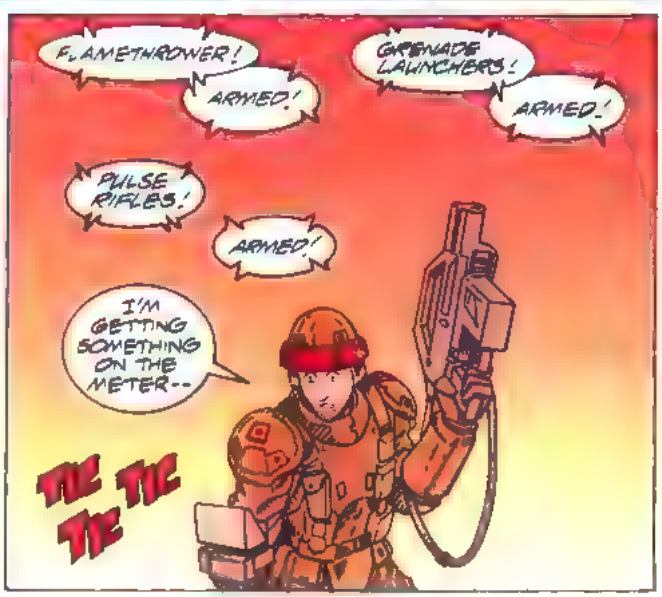

SHE'S WORKING!
SHUNK
FAIL-SAFE IN PLACE, POP!
SHUNK
FAIL SAFE ARMED!
YOU HAVE EIGHT HOURS BEFORE YOUR BUTTS TURN TO HOT TACO SAUCE! GET TO IT!
ARMED


BUGS ARE GONNA GET YOU, TEAPY!
THAT'S THE GENERAL IDEA
STAY ALIVE, MAN!

I'M AT THE FIRST SPUR. I CAN SEE MOST OF THE WAY ALONG! NOTHING MOVING!

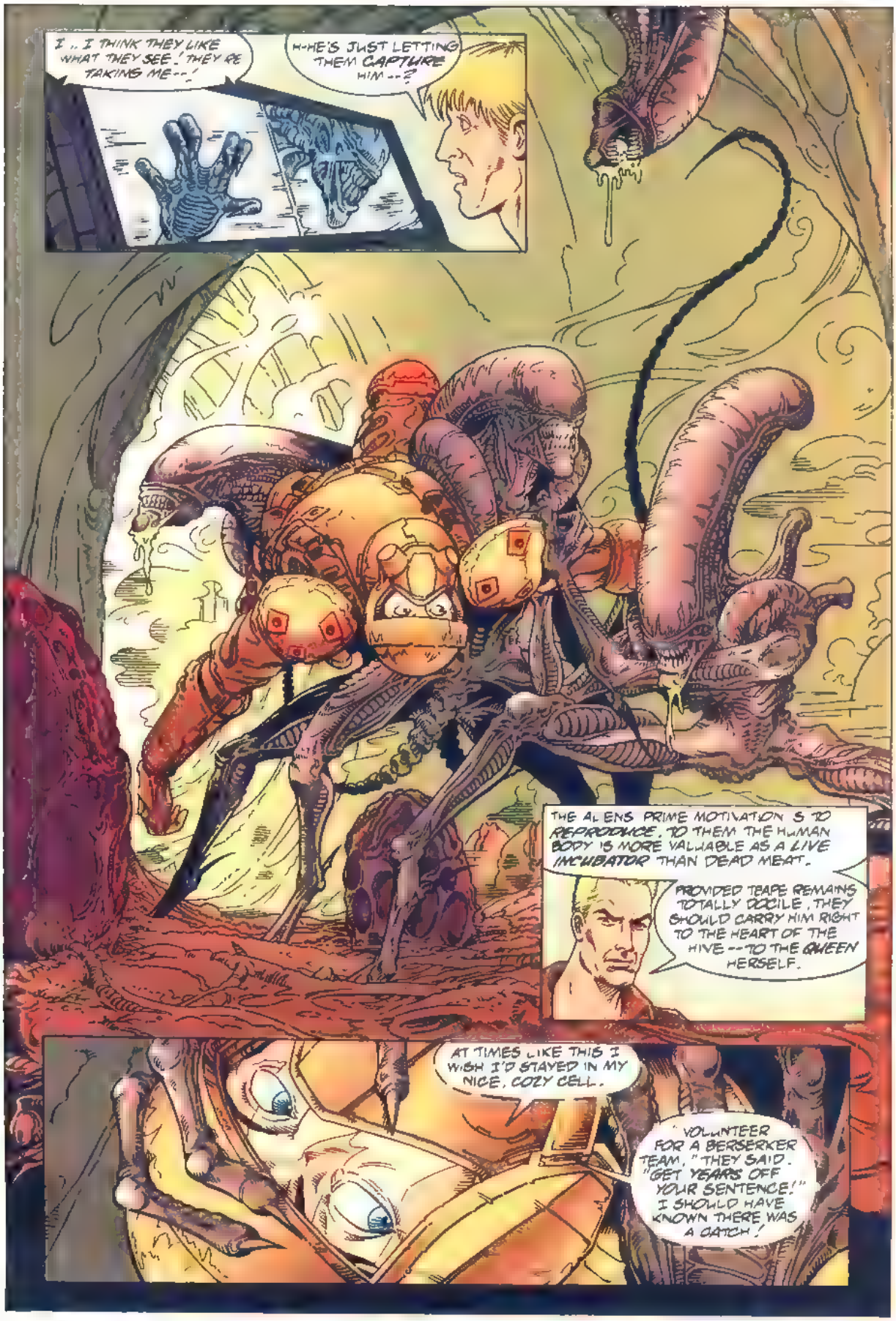

LEAVE IT FOR GROUND LEADER MOVE ON DOWN TEAPE.
YOU'RE SENDING HIM IN ALONE?
POINT MAN ALWAYS GOES AHEAD. WE DON'T JEOPARDIZE MAX UNTIL WE KNOW WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST.

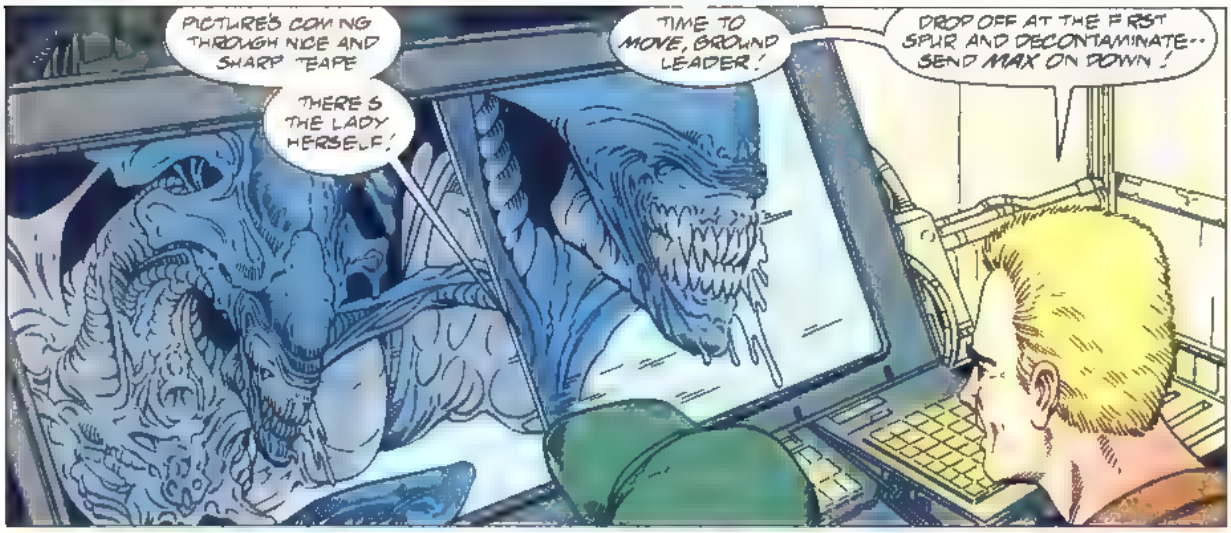

WHAD'YA THINK HE'S THINKIN'?
HE AIN'T THINKIN' ZIP MEATBALL... AN MAYBE IN THIS JOB THAT'S THE WAY TO BE!
LET'S RUN THROUGH THIS ONE LAST TIME--


FLAMETHROWER!
ARMED!
GRENADE LAUNCHERS!
ARMED!
PULSE RIFLES!
ARMED!
I'M GETTING SOMETHING ON THE METER--
TIC TIC TIC

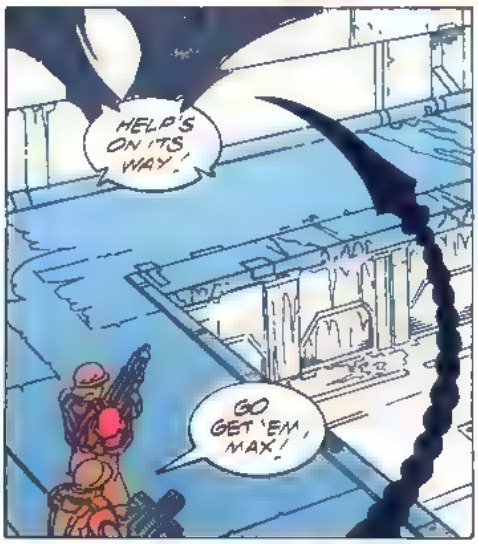
HHHRR
KLANG!
HRRHRR
FUDDA
FUDDA
THAT'S ONE WE DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT.
I'VE HIT BOTTOM! MASK SECURE.
FLARE!

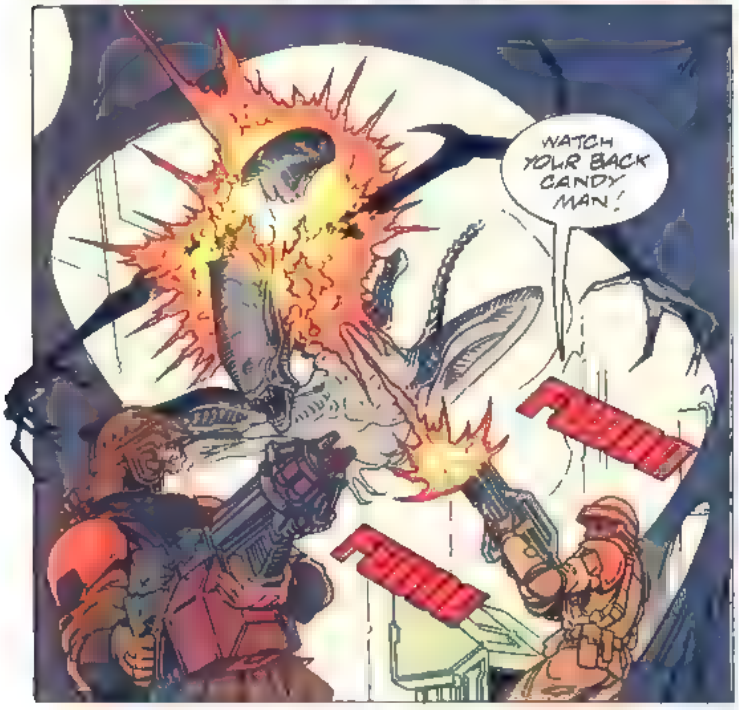
WE'VE HIT THE MOTHERLODE!
HELP ME!!!
TH-THEY'RE COMING FOR ME! THEY'RE ALL AROUND ME!

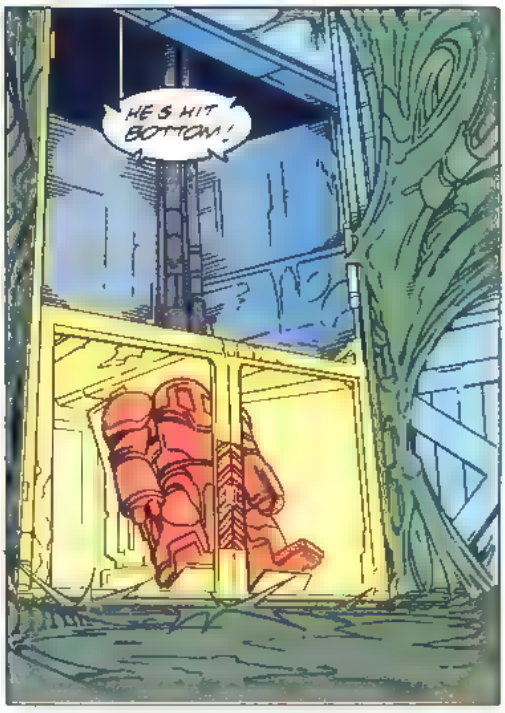

I .. I THINK THEY LIKE WHAT THEY SEE! THEY'RE TAKING ME--!
H-HE'S JUST LETTING THEM CAPTURE HIM--?
THE ALIENS' PRIME MOTIVATION IS TO REPRODUCE. TO THEM THE HUMAN BODY IS MORE VALUABLE AS A LIVE INCUBATOR THAN DEAD MEAT.
PROVIDED TEAPE REMAINS TOTALLY DOCILE, THEY SHOULD CARRY HIM RIGHT TO THE HEART OF THE HIVE--TO THE QUEEN HERSELF.
AT TIMES LIKE THIS I WISH I'D STAYED IN MY NICE, COZY CELL.
"VOLUNTEER FOR A BERSERKER TEAM," THEY SAID. "GET YEARS OFF YOUR SENTENCE!" I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THERE WAS A CATCH!


PICTURE'S COMING THROUGH NICE AND SHARP TEAPE
THERE'S THE LADY HERSELF!
TIME TO MOVE, GROUND LEADER!
DROP OFF AT THE FIRST SPUR AND DECONTAMINATE-- SEND MAX ON DOWN!

uhhhhh
NO SAVING ANY OF THESE POOR DEVILS, POP! HURRY UP WILL YOU?


HELP'S ON ITS WAY!
GO GET 'EM, MAX!

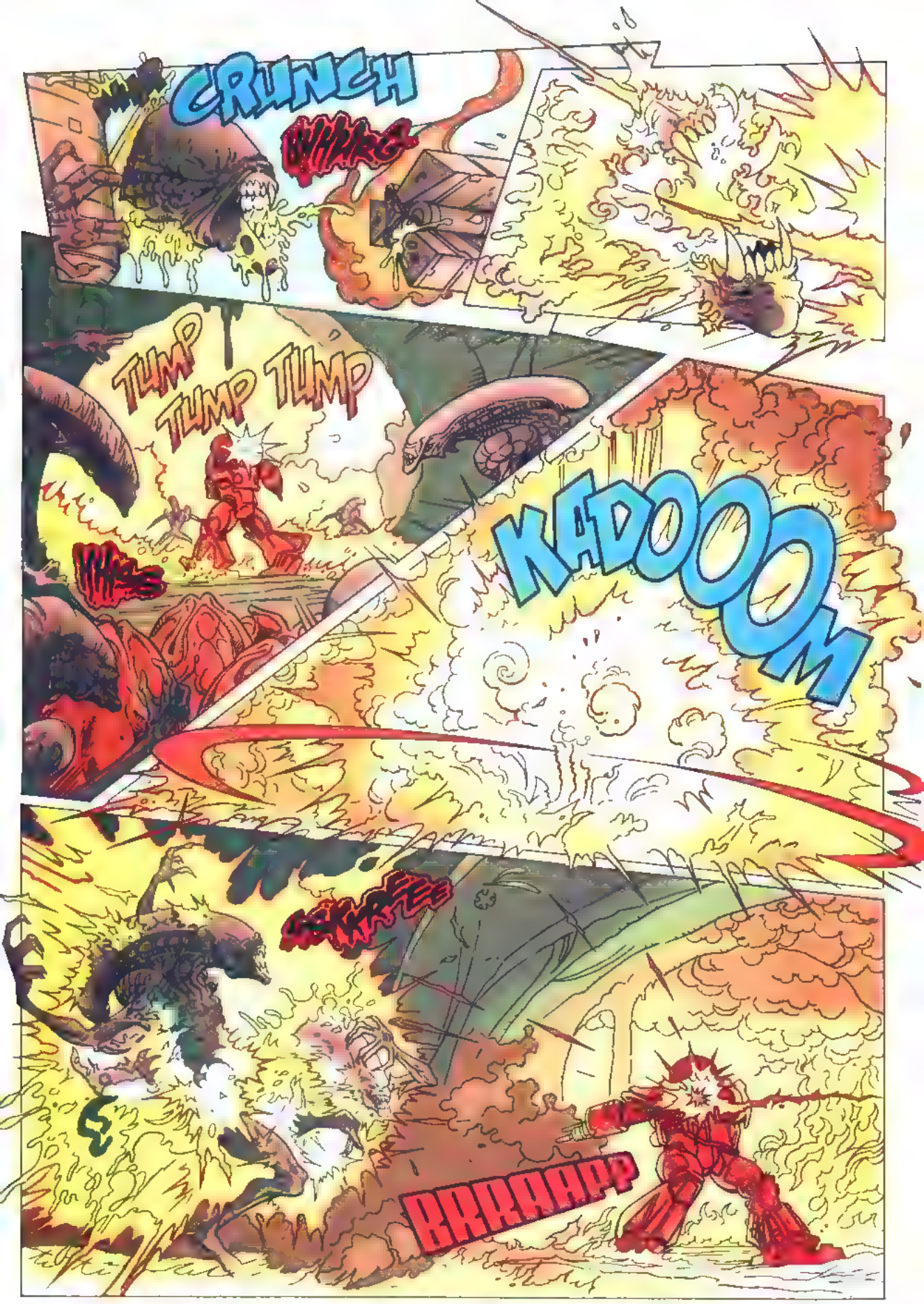

WATCH YOUR BACK CANDY MAN!

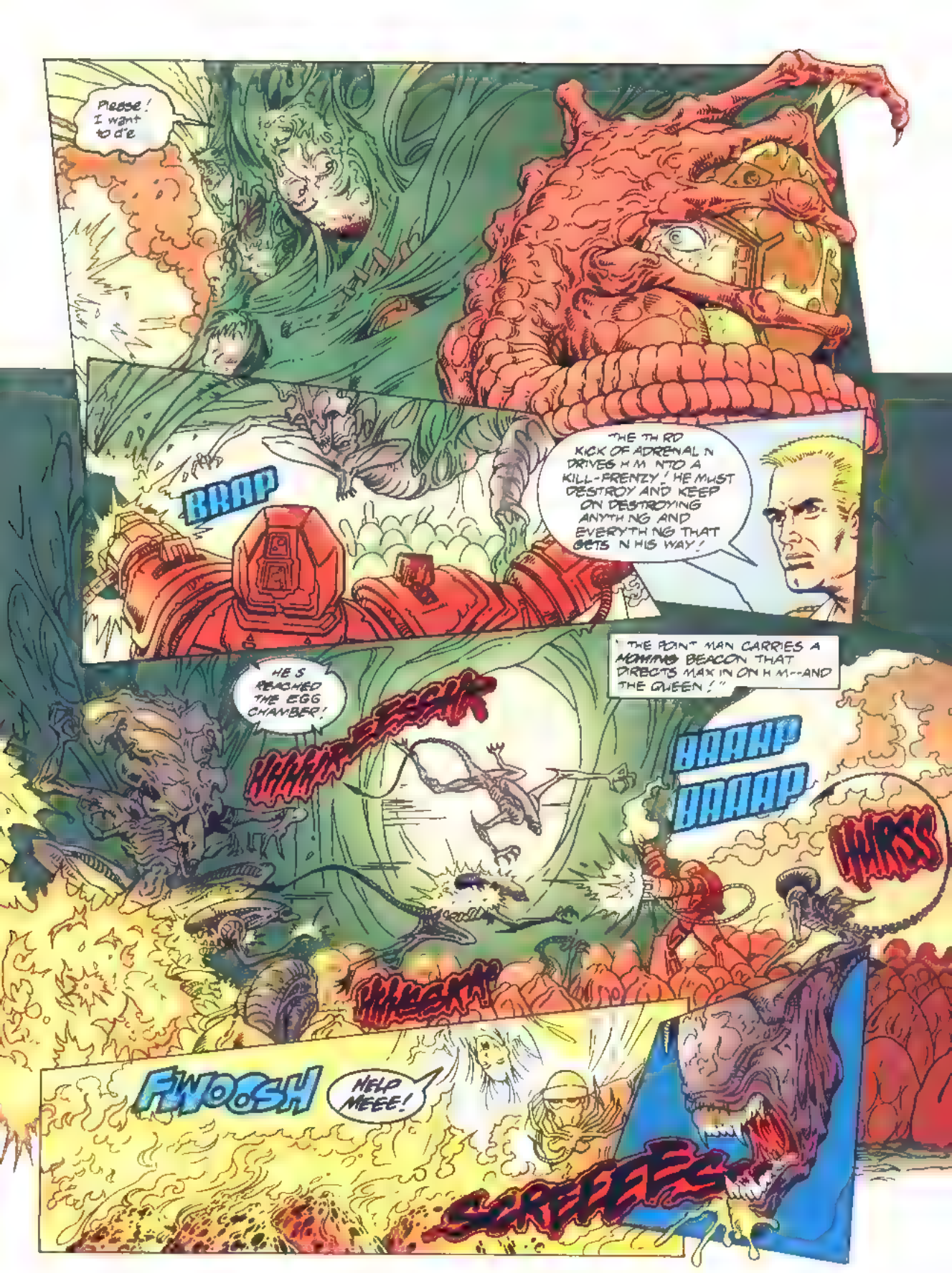

HE'S HIT BOTTOM!

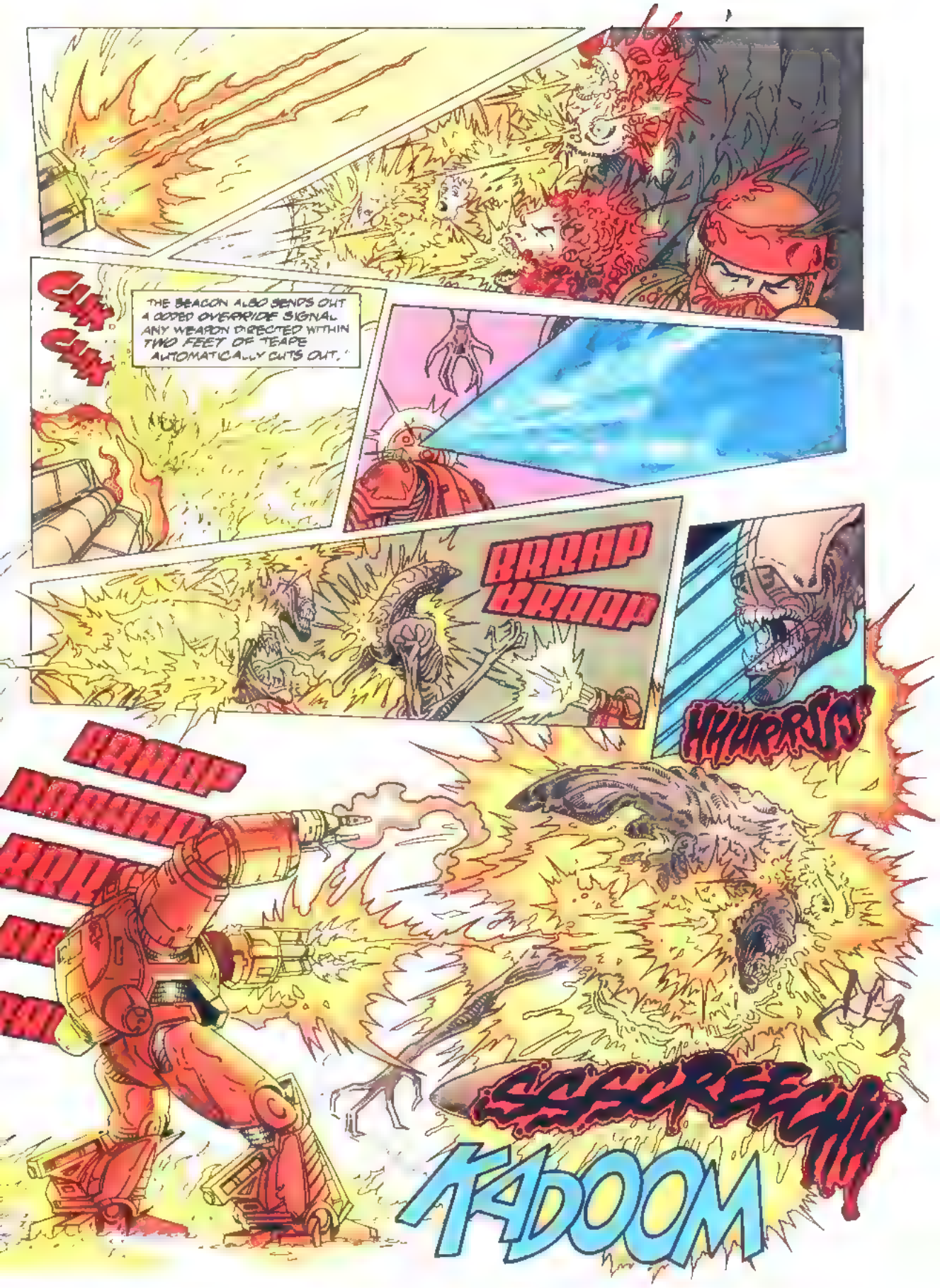
CEASE SEDATION! FLUSH HIM!
FLUSHING!
KICK IN ADRENALIN!
ADRENALIN LEVEL ONE!
NUUHHH!
NUUUHHH
HIT HIM AGAIN!
LEVEL TWO!
NUUUHH!
BRING HIM TO THE BOIL!
LEVEL THREE!
FULL SCAN

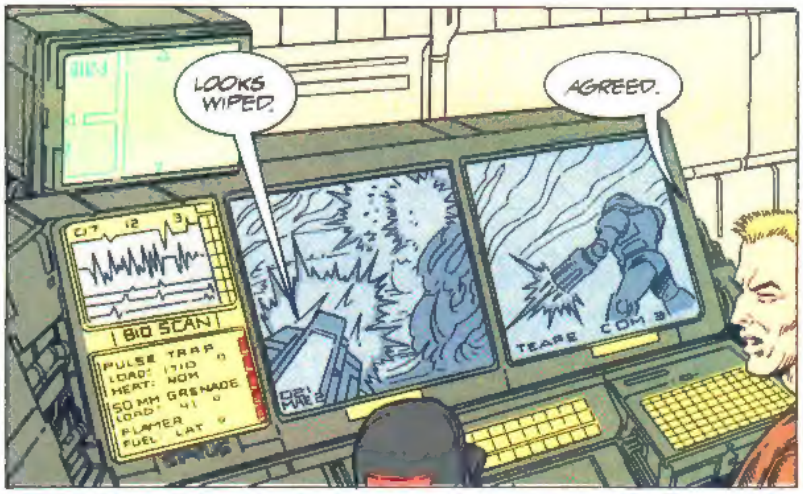
KRANK

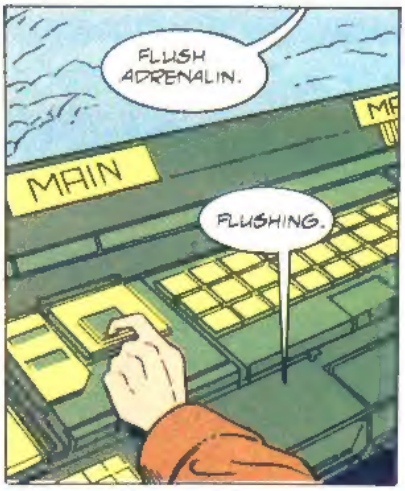
KRAKOOOMPPP
FWOMSH
KRRRHSSS
RRRRRAPPP
YLANG

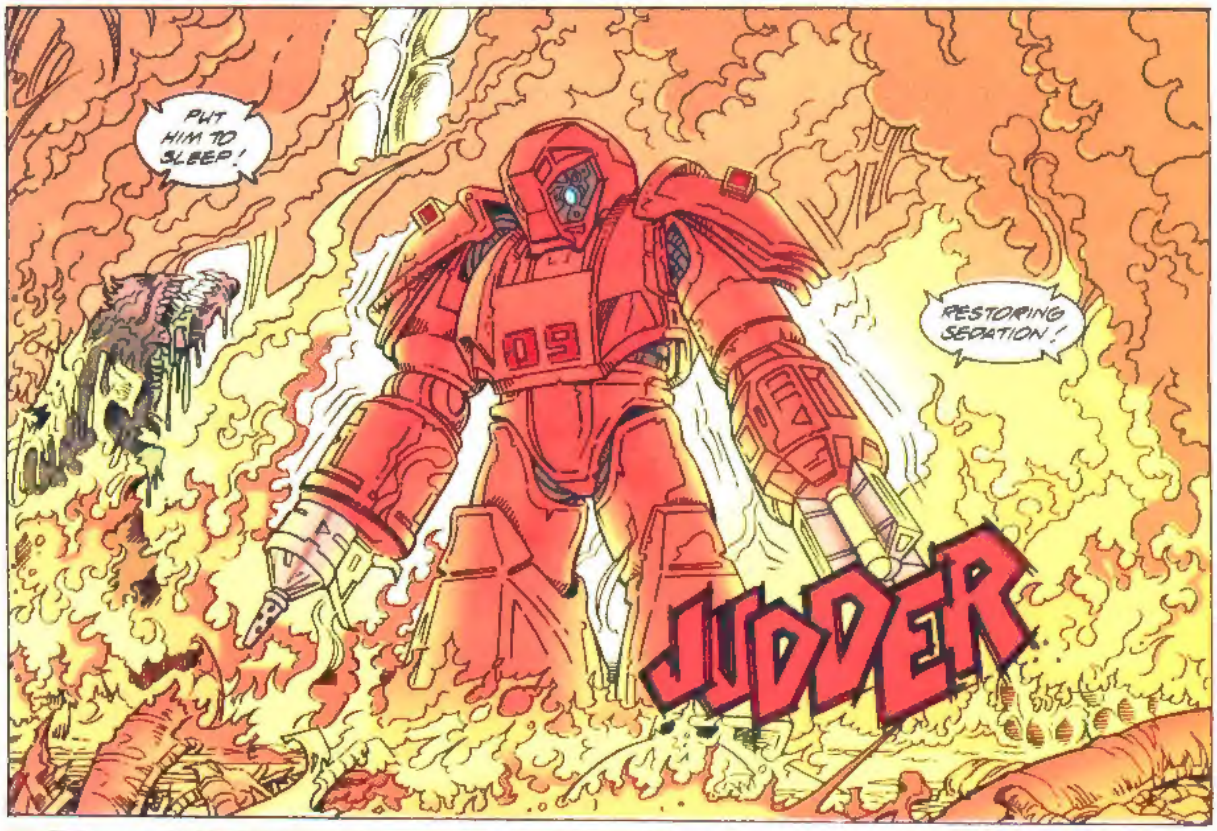

CRUNCH
WHIRR
TUMP TUMP TUMP
KADOOM
SCRREE
RRRAAAP

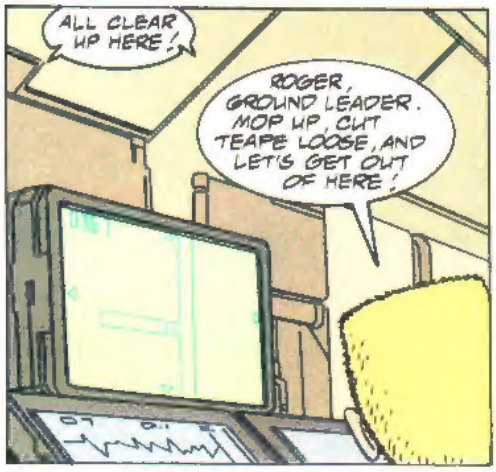

Please! I want to die
BRRP
THE THIRD KICK OF ADRENALIN DRIVES HIM INTO A KILL-FRENZY! HE MUST DESTROY AND KEEP ON DESTROYING ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING THAT GETS IN HIS WAY!
HE'S REACHED THE EGG CHAMBER!
"THE POINT MAN CARRIES A HOMING BEACON THAT DIRECTS MAX IN ON HIM--AND THE QUEEN!"
HAAAIR-EEEEHR
BAAAP
BAAAP
HHRSS
HHEEEH!
FWOOSH
HELP MEEE!
SCREEEE


CLIK CLIK
THE BEACON ALSO SENDS OUT A CODED OVERRIDE SIGNAL. ANY WEAPON DIRECTED WITHIN TWO FEET OF TEAPE AUTOMATICALLY CUTS OUT.
BRRAP BRRAP
HHURRUSH
BRRAP
SSSCREECH
KADOOM

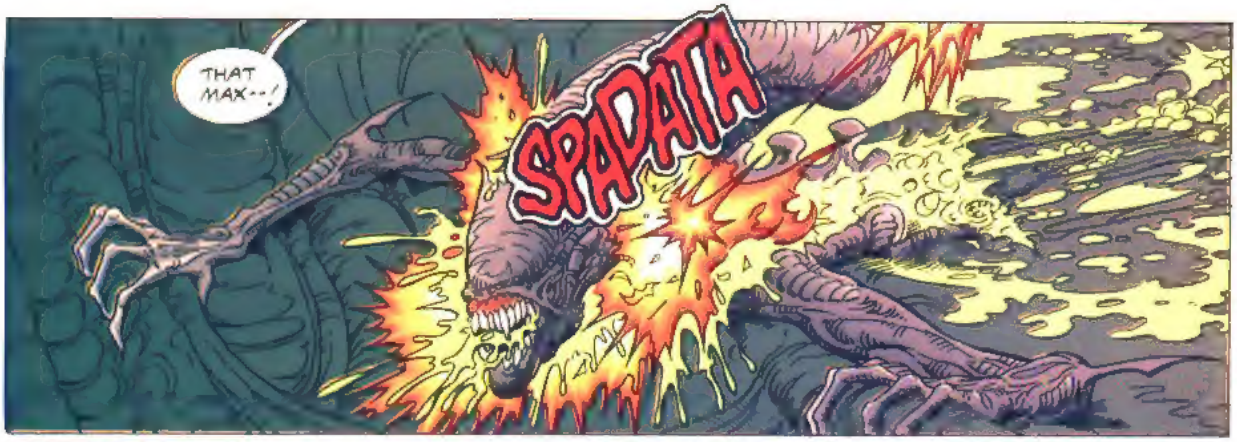

LOOKS WIPED.
AGREED.
BIO SCAN
PULSE TRAP
LOAD: 1710
HEART: NOM
50 MM GRENADE
LOAD: 41
FLAMER
FUEL LAT
TEAPE COM 3


FLUSH ADRENALIN.
MAIN
FLUSHING.

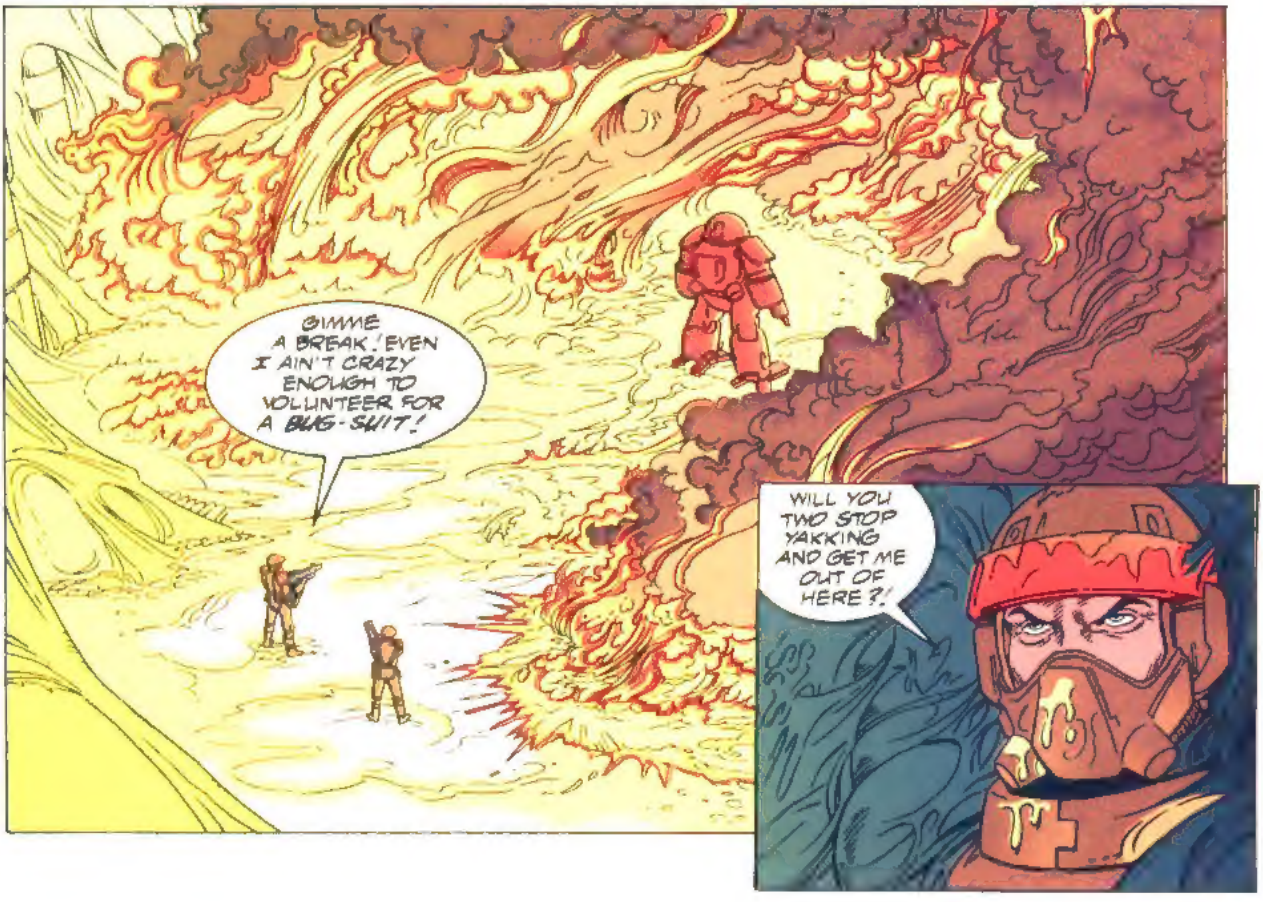

PUT HIM TO SLEEP!
RESTORING SEDATION!
09
JUDDER

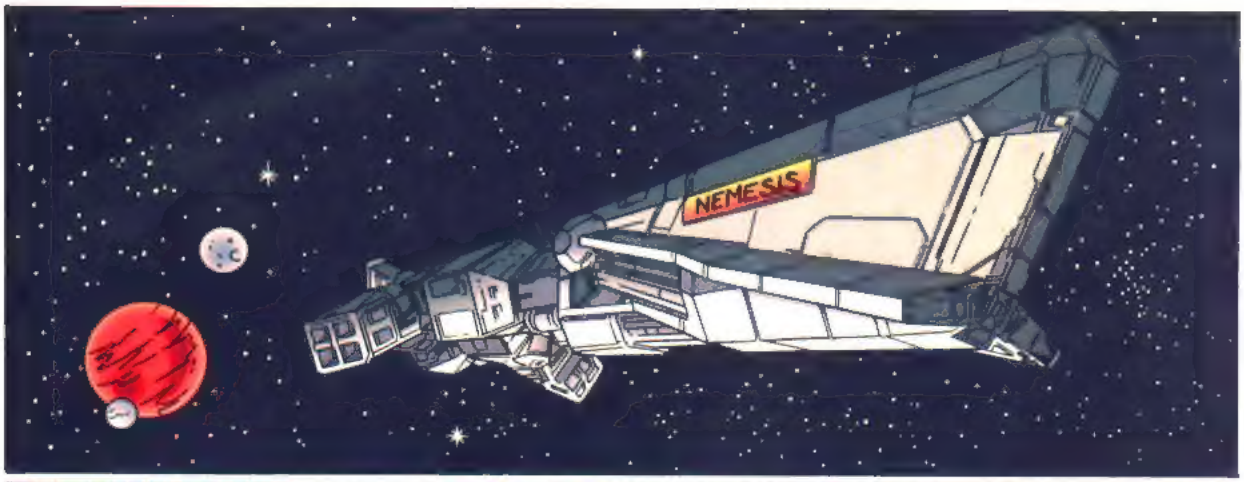

ALL CLEAR UP HERE!
ROGER, GROUND LEADER. MOP UP, CUT TEAPE LOOSE, AND LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!

LOOKS LIKE YOU GOT YOUR MINE BACK, STURGES.

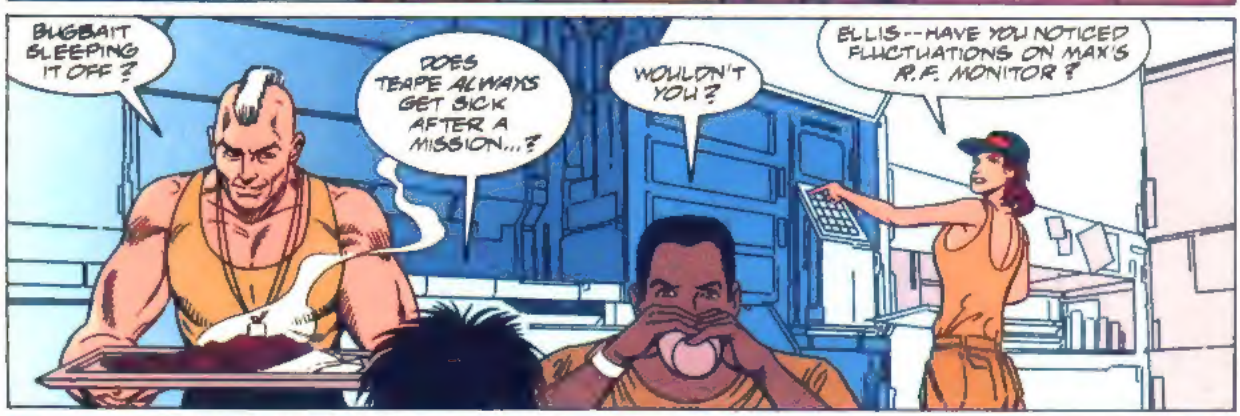

THAT MAX--!
SPADATA

NEVER LEAVES NOTHIN' WORTH SHOOTIN'! HOW COME HE GETS ALL THE FUN ?
FUDDA
MAYBE YOU OUGHTA APPLY FOR HIS JOB, PULASKI.


GIMME A BREAK! EVEN I AIN'T CRAZY ENOUGH TO VOLUNTEER FOR A BUG-SHIT!
WILL YOU TWO STOP YAKKING AND GET ME OUT OF HERE?!

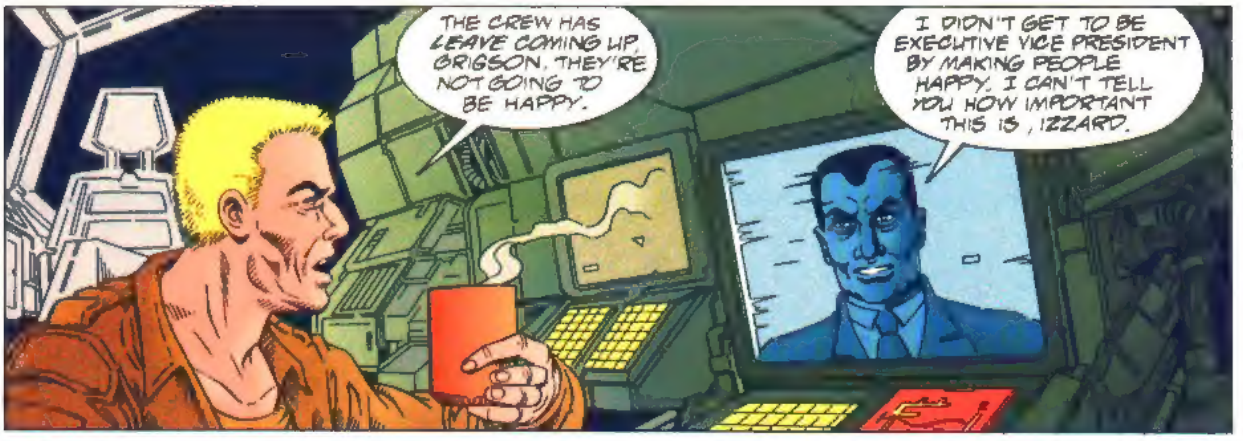

NEMESIS

HOW MANY TIMES WE RISK OUR NECKS FOR JERKS LIKE STURGES?
WHEN I FINISH MY THIRTY I'M GONNA BUY ME A BUG FOR A PET AN' FEED IT ON JERKS.
FROM YOU I CAN BELIEVE IT, PULASKI.


BUGBAIT SLEEPING IT OFF?
DOES TEAPE ALWAYS GET SICK AFTER A MISSION...?
WOULDN'T YOU?
ELLIS--HAVE YOU NOTICED FLUCTUATIONS ON MAX'S R.F. MONITOR?

I DIDN'T THINK IT WAS SERIOUS ENOUGH TO BOTHER YOU WITH.
ANYTHING GOES WRONG WITH MAX I WANT TO KNOW ABOUT IT RIGHT AWAY--HOWEVER UNIMPORTANT IT MAY SEEM TO YOU, ELLIS.
SORRY.
KEEP AN EYE ON IT. LET ME KNOW IF THERE'S ANY CHANGE.

I HAVE SOME BAD NEWS FOR THE REST OF YOU. POP'S TALKING TO GRIGSON. WE'VE BEEN ORDERED TO DIVERT.
NO!



D.S. SERVICE TERMINAL IN QUAD NINE FOUR NINER. WE HAVE... REASON TO BELIEVE THERE IS AN INFESTATION ABOARD. IT'S NOW OFF STATION AND OUT OF CONTACT.

THE TERMINAL HAS A STAFF OF OVER FOUR HUNDRED, IZZARD. IF ALIENS HAVE WIPED THEM OUT, THIS COULD BE THE MOTHER OF ALL BUGHUNTS!

BAY 11

BAY 12

SERVICE BAY 74

74

NEXT: NIGHTMARE ON TERMINAL 949!